

contribution, fig. 128 giving the beak of a typical Shearwater, and figs. 129 & 130 those of Petrels of the genus *Æstrelata*. I am of opinion that *Æ. vociferans* was closely related to *Æ. caribbea* (fig. 129), as I have attempted to show upon a previous page of the memoir.

“The differences in the osseous mandibles of a Petrel (*Æstrelata vociferans*) and a Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) are easily appreciated upon comparing those parts in figs. 5 & 6 of pl. i. All Petrels and petrel-like birds possess osseous beaks or mandibles, such as we find figured in figs. 1-5, pl. i. ; in fig. 11 of pl. iii., as well as in Cook’s and the Diving Petrels.

“The *tarsometatarsus* is generally long and slender in the Petrel-like forms ; shorter and stouter in the Shearwaters. (See the various figures of this bone on my plates.)

“The ‘Calow,’ then, was a Petrel of the genus *Æstrelata*; and with this point settled, I can proceed to give an account of its skeleton.”

A full account of its osteology here follows in my memoir, which some day will doubtless be published.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XX.

Upper figure : The entrance to Crystal Cave, Bermuda.

Lower figure : Mr. Mowbray at work in the interior of Crystal Cave.

XXXI.—*Eider Duck on the Ythan.*

By Brig.-General H. R. KELH, M.BAM.O.U.

THE river Ythan flows into the North Sea between Aberdeen and Peterhead. The coast there is very wild. Along the shores are sandhills, bordered inland by stretches of rough heather—a country very interesting to the naturalist, as it teems with bird-life.

In the spring months the chief feature of the Ythan Estuary is the enormous number of Eider Duck : hundreds of them, male and female, congregated on the sands or

sitting in dozens by the side of the river, were so tame that they allowed me to row to within ten or fifteen yards of them before they would move, and then flew only a few hundred yards before again settling. The males are very conspicuous in their black and white plumage and curiously marked heads, but the dark brown females from a short distance look like stones along the water's edge.

All day they keep up a ceaseless gabbling noise and mournful crooning, which I can only compare to the sound of people talking some distance away. During May they breed in great numbers among the coarse grass on the sand-dunes, or in the patches of heather, within easy reach of the river. The nests, with the usual lining of eiderdown, contain from four to five eggs of an olive-brown colour; and, I regret to say, a very large number are taken by lads from the neighbouring villages, also by people who ought to know better: one of these had a basketful, and when I suggested that there is such a thing as the "Wild Birds Preservation Act," replied: "No one bothers about that up here, and the eggs are very good eating."

My boatman said that the female does not sit until her full complement of eggs is laid, and that "they are verra warm burds" as he put it; and, once they begin to sit, the great heat from their bodies, helped by the warmth of the sandy surroundings, very quickly hatches out the young. The first I saw this year was on the 3rd of June: two, if not three, broods of newly-hatched little black balls of fluff swimming about with their mothers in a party of ten or fifteen.

My boatman also informed me that formerly all the Eider Duck, male and female, disappeared in the autumn, but that during the last three or four years a few have remained throughout the winter; adding that, as soon as all the young are out, the males depart and are seen no more, leaving their families to be looked after by the mothers—much like paterfamilias, who sometimes seeks a change from his domestic ties and migrates to the Metropole, Brighton, or to Carlsbad for an imaginary attack of gout!

Shield-Duck, Terns, and Oystercatchers were also breeding about the Ythan—the Shield-Duck in holes and rabbit-burrows, the others on the shingle, as a rule further up the river.

The Terns were in hundreds about the estuary, hovering hawk-like, and then darting with a splash down into the river after the myriads of young sand-eels, which, with sea-trout below and the birds above, had a poor time. I noticed many young Terns being fed by the parents; so they apparently nest during May. They seem to feed almost from daylight till dark, except during certain stages of the tide, when apparently the young eels are not plentiful; then the birds rest in flocks on the sand-banks, or mussel-beds, exposed by low water—which reminds me that the Eider Duck also seems to feed on the small mussels.

Among other birds I have noticed are Curlew, Redshanks, Ringed Plover, and Herring-Gulls, and I am informed that the Black-backed Gulls sometimes breed in the neighbourhood.

XXXII.—*Obituary.*

JOHN ALEXANDER HARVIE-BROWN.

The ranks of Scottish naturalists have suffered a great loss by the death of Dr. Harvie-Brown, who died on July 26 last, at the age of 72. In early life a very active man and a keen sportsman, he travelled widely, but of late years he has been unable to move about and is therefore little known to the younger generation of ornithologists.

Born at Dunipace House in Stirlingshire (where he died) in August 1814, he was the only son of John Harvie-Brown of Quarter and Shirgarton and Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Spottiswoode of Dunipace. He was educated at Merchiston and subsequently at Edinburgh and Cambridge Universities. At Cambridge he became acquainted with Professor Newton, with whom he remained on intimate terms until the death of the latter in 1907.

In 1871 and 1872 he visited, in company with the late